

CITY OF BELMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2008, 7:00 PM

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Parsons, Frautschi, Horton, Mayer, McKenzie, Mercer
Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Associate Planner Gill (AP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA), Recording Secretary Flores (RS)

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. Minutes of December 18, 2007

MOTION: By Vice Chair Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, to accept the Minutes of December 18, 2007, with grammar corrections submitted before the meeting by Vice Chair Frautschi and Commissioner Horton.

Ayes: Frautschi, McKenzie, Horton, Mayer, Mercer, Parsons*
Noes: None

*Chair Parsons voted for approval of the portion of the Minutes through Item 5A, at which time he left the meeting.

Motion passed 6/0

5. OLD BUSINESS

5A. Extension of Approval – 2847 San Juan Boulevard

AP Gill summarized the staff Memorandum, concurring with the applicant's request for an extension.

Commissioner Mercer asked for the status of the original Condition of Approval that required that the applicant address the sidewalk issue and whether there would be a sidewalk across the street. CDD de Melo responded that at a staff meeting with Public Works it was determined that, because of the slope of the adjacent street, the requirement for a sidewalk would be problematic and was not required, and the applicant had the option of creating sidewalk improvements across the street.

MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to adopt the Resolution approving an extension of a Single-Family Design Review for 2847 San Juan Boulevard (Appl. 2002-0054).

Ayes: Horton, Mayer, McKenzie, Mercer, Frautschi, Parsons
Noes: None

Motion passed 6/0

Chair Parsons announced that this item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

5B. Final Landscape Plan - 1519 Ridge Road

AP Gill summarized the Staff Memorandum, concurring with the proposed revised landscape plan modifications.

Commissioner Mercer asked for clarification of the arbor/stucco wall and the material of the walkway that goes along the side of the house.

Andy Singh, owner/applicant, addressed the Commission and stated that the pathway is decomposed granite, adding that Ray Davis had approved the design. Responding to Commissioner Mercer's questions, Mr. Singh stated that 1) the sidewalk going down the perimeter of the house was intended to provide separation from some of the plantings close to the house and a way to get to the back yard, 2) it could be possible to eliminate the interior path and landscape that whole area, 3) he was not clear of the landscape architect's intentions for the trike turn path turnaround, 4) the reason for the arbor was to make the house appear stepped down and not as bulky from the street, and 5) the stucco wall would be directly on the sidewalk so there would be no plantings on the stucco wall, it would be behind the property line, and the plantings to the side of the stucco wall form a natural wall.

CDD de Melo asked that the following sentence be added to the first bullet point of the proposed additional Condition of Approval in the Resolution: "The applicant shall vest this requirement via a deed restriction against the subject property."

Discussion ensued regarding the possible requirement for a Variance for the arbor/wall because it may be in the public right-of-way.

MOTION: By Commissioner McKenzie, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt the Resolution approving a Final Landscape Plan for 1519 Ridge Road (Appl. No. 2006-2008), with the added Conditions of Approval and the following additions: 1) the first bullet point shall include the sentence proposed by CDD de Melo above, 2) if the arbor or any of the structures require a Variance, they are not approved tonight and the Variance will come back to the Commission, and 3) a condition requiring replacement of the maple tree if it dies.

Ayes: McKenzie, Horton, Mayer, Mercer, Frautschi, Parsons
Noes: None

Motion passed 6/0

Chair Parsons announced that this item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

5C. Final Landscape and Irrigation Plan - 525 Kingston Road

CDD de Melo summarized the staff memorandum in AP Walker's absence, recommending approval, and answered questions from the Commission.

Discussion ensued regarding placement of trees and shrubs, and the inclusion of grass without irrigation back to the rear property line.

Sean Kent, owner, stated that the grass was included in order to meet the previous requests from the Commission to reduce hardscape.

CDD de Melo summarized the Commission's preferences as follows:

- Denotation of #2 on west side of driveway; what was a tree is now to be a shrub.
- Tree planted in mini-mulch area; staff will work with the applicant on latitude of planting of that tree.
- The substitution of Agapanthus and Roses was not a mandate but merely a suggestion because of deer issues.
- Irrigation details to be finished for any areas within the lawn. Not appropriately defined
- Clearly defined that #2's are Oleander.
- Will work with the applicant on mini-mulch extension along the rear.
- Decomposed granite substitution on the east side of the driveway as it wraps around the plantings denoted on #3 and #7.
- Will be finished out at the Building Permit issuance level.

MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to adopt the Resolution approving a Final Landscape Plan for 525 Kingston Street (Appl. No. 2005-0051), with the Conditions of Approval and additional conditions as described and amended above.

Ayes: Horton, Mayer, McKenzie, Mercer, Parsons
Noes: Frautschi

Motion passed 5/1

Chair Parsons announced that this item may be appealed to City Council within 10 calendar days.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

6A. PUBLIC HEARING – 550 Island Parkway

To consider a Conditional Use Permit and Design Review to modify a Detailed Development Plan to allow construction of a batting cage adjacent to the South Field at the Belmont Sports Complex. (Appl. No. 2007-0073)

APN: 040-360-390; Zoned: PD (Planned Unit Development)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

Applicant: BRSYSA, Attn. Mark Hunter

Owner: City of Belmont

CDD de Melo summarized the Staff Report and answered questions from the Commission.

Mark Hunter, representing the youth softball organization, answered questions and stated that they carry their own liability insurance for all the girls, that they would be fixing their own structure and that their insurance names the City of Belmont as an additional insured.

Commissioner Horton suggested that a provision be added regarding responsibility for removal of the equipment at the end of its useful life. CDD deMelo will work with Parks and Recreation regarding a condition covering this issue.

Chair Parsons opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 6/0 by a show of hands.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mayer, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt the Resolution Approving a Conditional Use Permit to Amend a Detailed Development Plan and Design Review for 550 Island Parkway (Appl. No. 2007-0073).

Ayes: Mayer, Horton, McKenzie, Mercer, Frautschi, Parsons
Noes: None

Motion passed: 6/0

Chair Parsons announced that this item may be appealed to City Council within 10 calendar days.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. Priority Calendar Spring 2008

Chair Parsons suggested that, in light of the items already on the Planning staff agenda, the Commission they try not add too much more to the list.

CDD de Melo summarized the staff memorandum, explaining that on page 4, current "Below-the-Line" topics have been changed to include only three projects: Parking Lot Lighting and Screening Standards and Security, Recognition Program – Commercial Properties, and Tree Ordinance Revisions. He added that the Planning Department thrust has been on the Economic Development Strategy Program and General Plan Update and they want to make progress on these before taking on new projects.

Commissioner Mercer noted her frustration with large storage areas relative to existing non-habitable space, and Chair Parsons hoped for a clear definition on how to figure the slope of a lot. CDD de Melo responded that these should be clearer when the zoning code definitions being assembled by SP DiDonato is completed.

Commissioner Mercer asked that consideration be given to Planning Commission treatment of properties on Ralston's scenic corridor. In November 2006 Commissioner Frautschi had asked for "Special fence and driveway landscape standards along Ralston and Alameda as local designated scenic byways." CDD de Melo will add that to the list to be voted upon.

Commissioner McKenzie brought up the subject of street lighting, upgrade and replacement guidelines. Chair Parson and CDD de Melo responded that Public Works and Council are already moving on that topic.

Responding to questions from Commissioners McKenzie and Mayer, CDD de Melo explained the status and vision of the potential annexation of the Harbor Industrial Area, agreeing that it should be listed on the Priority Calendar, and the development of the Downtown Specific Plan amendment. He suggested that Commissioners send any thoughts they have relative to architectural restrictions that are currently in place to him so that they can be considered as they move forward on the draft language.

Commissioner Frautschi read from his prepared list of suggestions, which he will give to staff for their action. His proposals included consideration of the following items:

- Slope and floor area calculations in the San Juan Hills and designated slope areas and transferring of floor area to lots in commercial areas.
- Feasibility study about buildability on the City's "paper trail" properties and development of a policy of massive heritage tree plantings on City property not suitable for public walking paths.
- Develop policy of alley approaches for automobile garages in the Firehouse Square project to improve treescape.
- Narrow the paved width of select streets running perpendicular to Harbor Avenue, particularly 5th and 6th Streets, to provide more planting area.
- Establish landmark sign and landscaping on Alameda at Belmont's southern border.
- Regarding Grand Boulevard, concerted effort towards greening of certain areas in Belmont to acquire some unbuildable lots to establish microparks.
- Undergrounding of 11 power lines on El Camino Real from San Carlos border to Harbor. Perhaps it could be folded in to the current proposal to underground powers lines on Old County Road.

Chair Parsons suggested a review of the small properties on El Camino Real from Ralston north on the west side that are not really feasible for redevelopment, perhaps taking it up in the General Plan Update to find ways to encourage merger of those lots.

Commissioner Mayer suggested a revision to the tree ordinance that would put the responsibility for placement of trees under the Planning Division rather than Parks & Recreation, since they operate under a different set of rules and Planning generates the money. Chair Parsons suggested that the Tree Board

should include a member of the Planning Commission. CDD deMelo stated that they have been reviewing the Tree Ordinance and that they may need to look at it further.

CDD de Melo will turn the above comments into a Staff Report for the Commission's February 19th meeting.

7B. Discussion & Selection of Green Advisory Committee Representative (Verbal Report)

CDD de Melo stated that selection of members of the Committee will take place at the March 11th City Council meeting, and asked for nominations for a representative and alternate from the Planning Commission. After discussion, it was agreed that Vice Chair Frautschi would be the representative and Commission Mayer will be the alternate.

7C. Discussion Regarding Emmett House Donor Site – 843 Ralston Avenue - Temporary Landscape Plan

CDD de Melo asked the Commission for feedback on the Draft Temporary Landscape Plan that was attached to the staff memorandum.

Responding to Commissioner Horton's question, CDD de Melo stated that he believes the transformer located on the property is a permanent fixture that is supplying power to the Village Center. Commissioner Horton suggested that it be added to the Landscape Plan.

CDD de Melo described the City's vision of a public plaza area, noting that they are looking for something that has some permanency but with the understanding that this is not the final use of this particular piece of property – it is a temporary use of the site until the master development plan for the entire Village Center site is completed.

Chair Parsons suggested that plantings should have more height and that ground cover be added around the edges. He saw no advantage to putting small trees in pots, as planted trees can be relocated in 5-10 years.

Commissioner Mayer felt that the lot should be planted densely along the driveway adjacent to the medical building to screen the parked cars. Would prefer to have the open area facing the existing Village Center because that is where the activity is. He would open up the Ralston corner and make a circular area in the center of the site, with a path into Indulge Restaurant. Suggested moving the bike rack next to the transformers, adding a few tables and maybe a walled trellis.

Vice Chair Frautschi felt that the duct pipes on the restaurant are so loud that a conversation at the tables would not be possible. He recalled being told that the driveway was not owned by the Ralston Village Center – it had been a street at one time. He would like to see the entrance on Ralston eliminated eventually. A post that is part of the Village Center property needs to show on the plans, and if it is going to stay there it needs to have something growing around it.

Commissioner Mercer concurred with what had been said and thought a "T-shaped" walkway would be helpful. Would rather see money spent on extra shrubs and trees rather than benches.

Risa Horowitz, resident of Ralston Ave., addressed the Commission, suggesting that they consider using bamboo as it is a fast-growing grass, can screen beautifully, and puts more oxygen into the air than many other plants.

CDD de Melo was not clear where the bike rack should go but will find another location for it. Also, at Commissioner Mayer's suggestion, will consider the addition of a raised element to the parking lot for safety reasons, and also will add ground cover. He noted that the proposed budget for this temporary park is \$20,000 to \$25,000 from RDA funds.

Chair Parsons added that he would like to see the revised plan again.

8. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

8A. 500 Block – El Camino Real (East Side)

Investigation still underway with Code Enforcement and the Police Department regarding the removal of some 35 trees.

8B. Motel 6 – 1101 Shoreway Road

Security detail meeting scheduled for the following week.

8C. Mid-Peninsula Water District Property – Folger Drive

Reactivated. He reminded MPWD of the earlier review by the Commission and that they need to get the landscape changes conveyed within a plan and back to the Commission so they can get the plantings in. They indicated a commitment to that.

Commissioners Horton and Mercer left the room as they are recused from discussion of the following item.

8D. NDNU (Koret) Athletic Field

CDD de Melo stated that the four Commissioners who are seated (Mayer, McKenzie, Frautschi and Parsons) will constitute the group who will review the matter going forward, on the assumption that Chair Parsons and Vice Chair Frautschi will be reappointed. This will be the group that will look at the CUP when they eventually get to that stage. The City is commissioning its own acoustical study and expected to have a professional services agreement signed in the next two or three days. They would do noise sampling at some upcoming Lacrosse games; the first official game was scheduled for the following Saturday. They have not had a recent Task Force meeting as it was felt it was not prudent to meet until they have the study. Chair Parsons asked that they assure that the scope includes noise sampling from some of houses up on the hills.

Vice Chair Frautschi asked if the Mayor has an initiative in progress to meet with some neighbors on this issue. CDD de Melo replied that he was aware that there had been some discussions by the Mayor along those lines and that it would be outside the guise of the assembled task force.

Vice Chair Frautschi called attention to at least 5 Redwood trees on the mound that are dead and several that are suffering.

Chair Parsons called for a 5-minute recess.

Risa Horowitz, resident of Ralston Avenue, addressed the Commission about her feelings with regard to this item. She said she was there to ask that they work more closely with one another, and that she is willing to spend time to shape a workable plan for Koret Field. She noted that there had been more than 8 violations reported to the Police since they last met, but to her knowledge no enforcement action had been taken. She felt that the City's inaction has created an environment where the leadership of NDNU feels they can continue to ignore the terms of the CUP, adding that the most recent violation was on the previous Saturday when they decided to play a game in the later afternoon that was not on the schedule or the website.

Updates

Commissioners Horton and Mercer returned to the dais.

Commissioner Horton announced that she will not be at the February 19th meeting, and Commissioners Mayer and Mercer stated that they will be absent for the March 4th meeting.

Commissioner Mayer commented that he loves the new awning signs at Divino's restaurant, and the historical photos that are being displayed on the 3rd floor of City Hall. He asked if awards are ever given for good new or redesigned structures. CDD deMelo responded that the City has recently launched a Beautify Belmont program, for which awards will be conferred in the spring.

Chair Parsons reported that he had attended a meeting of Homeowner Association Presidents, that the tree group is going to be landscaping the median between Cipriani and Alameda, and that work will soon commence on the Twin Pines Park fence.

Vice Chair Frautschi reported on his attendance at the first meeting of the Tree Board.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2008

Liaison: Commissioner McKenzie

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mercer

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, February 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

Carlos de Melo
Planning Commission Secretary

CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.